

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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1. The city of Knezha (N 43-30, E 24-05) is located in the Danube valley, approximately 60 kilometers from Vratsa.
2. The sources of livelihood for the city of Knezha are drawn from agriculture and livestock breeding. This area is eminently suited to agriculture and livestock raising because the terrain is flat and vast and the soil fertile. Over 90 per cent of the population is employed in these pursuits. Everyone in Knezha owns a piece of land, except for the gypsies who, having been given land, always refused to cultivate it, preferring to remain beggars. Several times land was distributed to those without property, and around 1942 no citizen was without land and each family owned a minimum of 40 cultivable decares. However, no one owns more than 300 decares, and there are approximately 130 landowners with over 100 decares of land. A large portion of the population from 50 to 80 decares of land, which are sufficient to guarantee a comfortable living for one family.
3. Prior to 9 September 1944, a great deal of property belonged to religious communities, schools, libraries, livestock grounds, and the city hall. After that date all this land was expropriated, and a large percentage of the private landowners were incorporated into the kolkhoz.
4. The city of Knezha has approximately 13,000 inhabitants, most of whom are Bulgarians, but a large minority (about 800) is composed of gypsies who live in the eastern part of the city, north of the Turkish quarter. Another minority consists of 150 Turks devoted to handicraft work and to agriculture.
5. The Pleven-Byala Slatina and the Oryakhovo-Cherven Bryag roads cross in the center of Knezha. The other streets in the city are unpaved and are muddy in the winter and dusty in the summer.

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6. The population of Knezha, although hard-working and thrifty, has a low standard of living; in spite of this the city was in the process of rapid rebuilding until 1948, when the Communists forbade construction of new buildings.
7. After 9 September 1944, the city administration passed into the hands of men who were criminals and who had no previous experience in city government work. The few municipal employees who remained in service are persons who are always ready to follow the direction of the wind. Among these are: Ivan Zlatanov, Mara Dakova, Kanyu Kyusovski, and Iliya Beloperkinski.
8. A certain Kanyu Kusovski, aided by Sando Goshovski, is noted for his rigid enforcement of regulations which nearly always take away from families the last morsel of food. Dimitur Shopov, a municipal employee, also rigidly enforces the Communist laws.
9. After 9 September 1944, the first mayor was a lawyer, Angel Bachyiski, who, seconded by the People's Court, brought about the death of 18 persons and the imprisonment of 30 others. During his administration, a great deal of money was collected for the alleged use as "aid to the front" and "aid to power." Later Bachyiski was replaced by a former progymnaziya teacher, Petur Mikhatolov, who, together with his aide Petko Kusovski, became renowned for their rigid enforcement of Communist laws.
10. In 1950, Boris Tomov Katarsky was named mayor of Knezha. He was the son of a wealthy farmer who later went bankrupt. Katarsky particularly distinguished himself in the nationalization of land and in the persecution of landowners who opposed the kolkhoz. Kanchovski and Matyu Mladzhovski became known as two persons who assigned materials and foodstuffs only to Communists and to their own relatives.
11. The Knezha section of the Bulgarian Communist Party was created in 1923 and many of its members took part in the "September Revolution." In 1949, there were approximately 1,200 members of the Bulgarian Communist Party, and after the purge which took place that same year, that number was reduced by half. In early 1953, Party members in Knezha numbered 600. The secretary of the section was Vasil Mishovski, a vulgar and completely intolerant man.
12. A large portion of the population of Knezha were members of the dissolved Agrarian Party and many others favored it. The general line for collaboration and common fight with the Communists against the former rightists regimes which at one time was held by the Agrarian Party was accepted by the citizens of Knezha, members of the Agrarian Party, with certain reservations. After the coming to power of the Mushanov coalition in 1932, this collaboration terminated. In the Agrarian Party there were traitors, who, after the rise of the Communists, played their game and took part in the formation of the "Fatherland Front." These unscrupulous activists, after the official abandonment in 1945 of the "Fatherland Front" by the Agrarian Party, remained in the ranks of the traitors of the Bulgarian people, forming a new "Agrarian Party," headed by Alexandur Obov and Georgi Traykov. In Knezha, these men have only 50 followers, of which only three or four are farmers, while all the others are employees of the various municipal offices and teachers who had never interested themselves in politics and who became members of the so-called "Agrarian Party" only to preserve their positions.
13. A certain Tseko Petrovski is a known provocateur who, having become a member of the Agrarian Party in 1923, following orders of the Communists, is now employed to give an appearance of legality to the new party. 25X1  
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The group of youths of the pseudo-party of farmers, "ZEMS" (Zemedelskiya Mladezhki Soyuz; Agrarian Youth Union), which collaborates with the Communists, has only six members in Knezha (a gymnaziya teacher and five students from the same school) who have been granted work in return for their diligent activity as traitors.

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14. In Knezha there are five elementary schools for Bulgarians and one for the gypsy minority. Furthermore, there are a mixed gimnaziya, a gimnaziya for practical agriculture, a school for handicrafts and two progimnazi. Most of the teachers of the elementary schools and of the progimnaziya come from cadres which existed prior to 9 September 1944. In order to retain their positions they have adapted themselves to become promoters of the "new Communist doctrine," to take part in the collection of quotas, in preselection fights, and in public meetings and gatherings. The majority of teachers of the mixed gimnaziya of the handicraft school and of the agricultural school come from other parts of Bulgaria and are transferred after only one or two years' stay in Knezha.
15. From 1945 to 1947 the majority of the members of the opposition parties were found at the mixed gimnaziya and the agricultural gimnaziya. After that time the most active portion of the opposition was expelled from the school and others were obliged to become members of DSNM (Dimitrovski Sŭyuz na Narodnata Mladezh; Dimitrov Union of the People's Youth).
16. Teachers in Knezha who particularly distinguished themselves as the faithful followers of the Communists were: Vachko Marinski, Ivan Gorchev, Georgi Shyachki, Boris Marinski, Dedinski (fnu), Penka Milashka, Mara Nekhrizovska, Kharalampi Andreichev, Velichko Markovski, and others whose names are unknown. Certain teachers, in spite of the persecution, have remained faithful to their people; among these are: Savcho Koyarski, an active anti-Communist, former president of the agricultural gimnaziya, dismissed from the ranks of teachers since 1947; Rusko Bebovski; Zvetan Popov; Danyana Dahuverdshcheleva, Rusko Ninovski; and others, all fired by the Communists.
17. With the advent of Communism in Knezha, Combat Groups ("Voyna Grupa") of the Communist Party were formed, whose task it was to arrest the persons condemned by the People's Court and to bring about the disappearance of the enemies of the people. These groups were made up of criminals who today are militiamen, important administrative employees, agents of the DS (Dŭrzhavna Sigurnost; State Security), officials of the Party, or heads of professional organizations. Having eliminated in large part, the enemies of the people, the "Combat Groups" started carrying out military exercises in the area southeast of the city.
18. Auxiliary militiamen arrest citizens guilty of infractions to the norms, in order to convince them to join the kolkhes, and assist in the voluntary collection of feed quotas, and so forth.
19. The chief of the "Combat Groups" in Knezha is Angel Dzhangelski. Other members are: Ivan Bashov, and his wife Tsone, who took part in the murders at Oryakhovo after 9 September 1944; Petkov Dimitŭr Yanchev, collaborator of the DS; Ivan Tomov Dobrinski, fanatical Communist; Georgi Borisov Kaledzhkovski; Kanyu Kasovski; Nevena Petrova Stefanova; Vasil Mishevski, secretary of the Communist Party, and dozens of others.

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